



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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**Testimony of the Judicial Branch
Committee on Children Public Hearing
February 16, 2016**

**House Bill 5140, An Act Concerning the Use of Therapy Animals to Comfort
Children Testifying in Certain Criminal Prosecutions**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch concerning **House Bill 5140, *An Act Concerning the use of Therapy Animals to Comfort Children Testifying in Certain Criminal Prosecutions***. The Judicial Branch believes that this bill is unnecessary because a judge already has the authority to allow a therapy animal to aid any witness in testifying during a court proceeding.

The Appellate Court recently held that the Court has the inherent general discretionary authority to permit a suitably trained dog to sit near a witness when a need clearly is demonstrated. It should be noted that an appeal on this decision has been taken to the Supreme Court.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on this bill, and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.